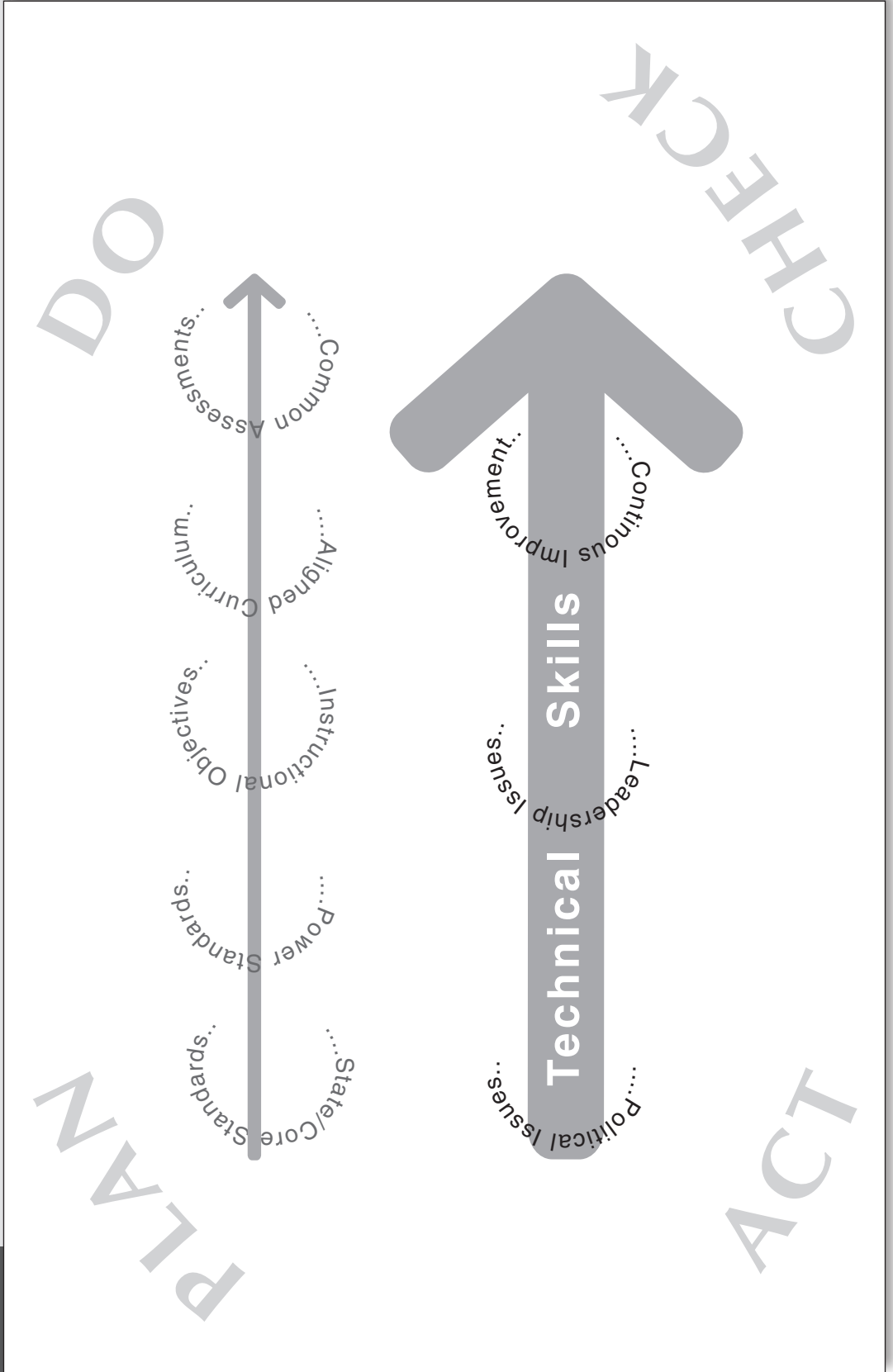


Figure 0.1 Plan, Do, Check, Act



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# *Preface*

**T**he journey from state standards to Power Standards to Quarterly Instructional Objectives to an aligned curriculum and common assessments appears rather simple in Figure 0.1 on the opposite page. However, as we all know, it is much more complicated than that. There are many additional steps involved in this process that must be deftly navigated if the journey is to be successful. This book is written specifically for you, the practitioner, who struggles daily with the many, complex tasks associated with public education while trying to improve student performance and do what is best for kids.

Power Standards have been around for years and are a process of looking at all the state standards in a particular state and determining which standards are so important and so central to the learning process that they must be learned by all students. This book will help you to involve the teaching staff in this important conversation, and in so doing, the teachers not only come to better understand the state standards but also come to agreement on exactly what it is all students must know and be able to do. This is a complex process and will be discussed in great detail in later chapters.

In addition to developing Power Standards, a concept that has been in use in public education for years, this book will explain the process of using those Power Standards to develop Quarterly Instructional Objectives, which will become the aligned curriculum so desperately needed by districts and schools to ensure student success. While totally based on the research and work of Doug Reeves, Larry Ainsworth, and others in the development of the Power Standards, these Quarterly Instructional Objectives are a new way to develop an aligned curriculum that is owned and understood by the local staff who developed that local curriculum and will add much to the communication process of helping students and parents understand the expected curriculum. These Power Standards and Quarterly Instructional Objectives will also be developed through a local process that takes the Power Standards for each grade level or content area and allows teachers to decide how to sequence instruction to ensure all students will learn the Power Standards. The Quarterly Instructional Objectives answer the question, If the Power Standard is the intended learning for the year, what must students learn first quarter, second quarter, and so on?

If I have seen farther than others,  
it is because I have stood on  
the shoulders of giants.

—Isaac Newton

These Quarterly Instructional Objectives are a different approach to the actual use of Power Standards, and they not only serve as the basis for the aligned curriculum but also are the perfect springboard for local educators to develop common quarterly assessments. If these five or ten Quarterly

Instructional Objectives developed by the local professional staff represent the required learning for the first quarter, can those same local teachers develop assessments to measure those specific skills? Absolutely! These common assessments will then give classroom teachers the information they need about student learning and academic progress that will allow them to adjust instruction to improve student learning. These common assessments will allow teachers to work together to compare the results and the instructional strategies that produced those results. Additionally, these locally developed common assessments can be used as the progress monitors for the Response to Intervention process, thus allowing teachers to use assessments that measure what was actually taught and expected to be learned. We continue to work to create a system that bridges the link between instruction and assessments to help all children learn and teachers to use assessment measures that reflect their actual instruction.

This book is written to help practicing educators, central office administrators, building principals, instructional leaders, and classroom teachers, apply the work of the great masters, Doug Reeves, Larry Lezotte, Mike Schmoker, Rick Stiggins, and others. Additionally, the training and experience I have received in total quality management, and especially system reforms from Lynn Feaver, serve as the foundation for this entire work. I thank them for their help and guidance over the years. Additionally, I have infused this book with the lessons learned in working in complex educational systems that are struggling to survive and make a difference for kids. It is on their shoulders that I stand and hope this book will help practicing educators to successfully apply the ideas and research of the great masters in the real-world setting in which they work and live.

This book and its approach attempt to be as simple and straightforward as possible. Because the research is so crystal clear and well known, your time and this book's space will not be taken in recapping that research. An abundance of studies shows that these approaches work, but this book will not summarize or explore that research. I will refer to the research throughout the book; if the reader is looking for a research summary, this is not the book.

If you are reading this book, you must be serious about the change process. Know that the path to change is fraught with danger and land mines. We have all stepped on several of those land mines and been ambushed at the pass, yet we have lived to laugh about it. This practical

advice, often contained in story boxes, will help you understand the practical aspect of the problems and help you avoid the land mines and the “stutter steps” that can cost time and commitment. Embarking on change is a journey you are freely choosing to undertake—enjoy the process and the people along the way.

True Insanity—Doing what you have always done and expecting the results to be different.

—Albert Einstein

Further, this book will look at the process of using the Power Standards to build an aligned curriculum and common assessments in more than just a linear progression of technical skills. The technical skills—the how-tos, if you will—will be addressed in a linear fashion, progressing from beginning to end in a step-by-step fashion. However, this book will also address the political and leadership issues as well as the continuous improvement mechanisms needed to make sure that these additional issues are addressed while the technical aspects of the change process are accomplished.

As you move from step to step in the logical progression of technical tasks needed to accomplish the creation of the Power Standards, Quarterly Instructional Objectives, and common assessments, the political, leadership, and continuous improvement issues will also be addressed. While these political, leadership, and continuous improvement issues will certainly be different at each stage of the linear development of the technical process, the book will also consider these issues and their changing demands and importance as part of the change process. As Larry Lezotte says, “It’s simple, but it ain’t easy.”

It is imperative to change how the people interact within the system, and that is very difficult work. Changing the rules of engagement and the way “we have always done it” challenges beliefs that are deeply, though often unconsciously, held about the correct way to do things. True systemic change will transform daily interactions among members of the group, most important including what they talk about within that system. Conversations about students and learning and how to change what we, the adults, do to improve that learning must become part of the new system.

While many talk about radically restructuring American public education through continuous progress education, ungraded classrooms, longer school days, and longer school years, the financial and political realities of those solutions are beyond the sphere of influence or the realm of possibility for practicing teachers and administrators in America. The purpose of this book, and the advice contained therein, is designed to help you, the practicing teachers and administrators, do things here and now within the local building/district that can significantly affect student learning and forever change the educational system that so desperately needs changing.

Larry Lezotte and Kathleen McKee (2006), in their book *Stepping Up, Leading the Charge to Improve Our Schools*, explain that the leader will need two things to change the current system:

1. knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to lead change, and
2. a proven model of organizational change that is relevant to education.

Both of these observations are true, and this book will focus on both the “proven model of organizational change that is relevant to education” (the technical knowledge strand) and the “knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to lead change” (the political, leadership, and continuous improvement strands). This book will frame the work of Reeves, Lezotte, Schmoker, Stiggins, and others within the total quality management framework of continuous improvement with a generous portion of leadership and political advice based on forty years of experience.

Furthermore, the work advocated in this book is absolutely possible in the real-world environment of public education. Doug Reeves with his 90-90-90 schools (90 percent minority, 90 percent poverty, and 90 percent meeting or exceeding state standards) and Larry Lezotte with his litany of effective schools (schools that show a huge improvement in student learning despite challenging demographics) present irrefutable proof that this work can be done. This work is done by ordinary people, but these ordinary people dare to do things differently. The successful people follow generally the same change formula—the agenda of the effective schools movement, the data-driven decision-making model, the continuous improvement model as outlined in total quality management, or some combination of these approaches.

## USING THIS BOOK

The Sample Results section shows real results obtained by schools and districts that have followed the work outlined in this book. These are results for students on various state assessments. The data paint a picture of results obtained by following the national research in typical school districts. These positive results were produced by school districts and buildings functioning in the real world, with all of the problems and issues you deal with on a regular basis in your own situation. The people in these buildings and districts chose to do things differently to produce different results, improved results for the students they serve. You have the same choice to do things differently and follow the national research to improve student performance; this book will help you do just that.

Each of the chapters closes with a Process Summary section. This is an attempt to summarize the critical points contained in the process so you

may refer to a quick set of points to help in understanding the entire process. The Process Checklist gives you the opportunity to go through the checklist as a kind of quick review to make sure you have done or considered all the important tasks.

Actual forms used by the author in applying this work are included in the book and are set in boxes to separate them from the regular text of the book. Spacing has been reduced for ease of publishing.

Public education is fraught with local politics as well as volatile social issues beyond the control of education. The purpose of this book is to help you negotiate this difficult terrain without getting blown up in the minefield that is called the change process. As the title says, this book will help you use the concept of Power Standards, a proven national model, to build an aligned curriculum and assessment system that will improve student learning. This use of Power Standards as the basis for an aligned curriculum and common assessments and the specific, commonsense ways to accomplish these tasks using local people are what set this book apart from the others. May it help you along in your always challenging and difficult, but incredibly important, journey.

While Figure 0.1 (page xiv) may suggest a linear system, it is not the author's intent to present this as a totally linear process. There is definitely a sequence to the work, but it is a scaffolding process wherein one thing builds on another. The Plan, Do, Check, Act model that surrounds the graphic is there to remind the reader that this entire process is built on continuous improvement and a cycle that constantly examines and improves our work.

To ensure that I am a good consumer of my own product and put this work through its own continuous improvement loop, I would ask every reader who sees something that could be expanded on, could be improved, or leaves the reader unsure of the intended action to please contact me at [jtcrawford@comcast.net](mailto:jtcrawford@comcast.net) to share your concerns or ideas for future publications or revisions. If the experiences and ideas can be shared in future editions, it will help all of us be more successful.